

States with big climate goals strip local power to block green projects

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI
and JOHN HANNA

Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) —

Clean energy developers had planned a 75-turbine wind farm in mid-Michigan's Montcalm County before local voters shot down the idea in 2022 and recalled seven local officials who had supported it. About 150 miles (240 kilometers) southeast, Clara Ostrander in Monroe County found herself at the center of a similar conflict as rising medical costs forced her and her husband to consider selling land her family has owned for 150 years. Leasing a parcel to an incoming solar farm could save the property, but neighboring residents complained so vehemently that Ostrander said the township changed its zoning to block the project.



Solar panels are seen at the DTE O'Shea Solar Park work in Detroit, Nov. 16, 2022.

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Associated Press
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John Kerry, the U.S. climate envoy, to leave the Biden administration

By SEUNG MIN KIM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — John Kerry, the U.S. special envoy on climate, is stepping down from the Biden administration in the coming weeks, according to two people familiar with his plans. Kerry, a longtime senator and secretary of state, was tapped shortly after Joe Biden's November 2020 election to take on the new role created specifically to fight climate change on behalf of the administration on the global stage.

Kerry's departure plans were first reported Saturday by Axios.

Kerry was one of the leading drafters of the 2015 Paris climate accords and came into the role with significant experience abroad, as sec-



John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, speaks during a news conference at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit, Dec. 6, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Associated Press

retary of state during the Obama administration and from nearly three decades as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Biden's decision to tap Kerry for the post was seen

as one way the incoming president was making good on his campaign pledge to battle climate change in a more forceful and visible manner than in previous administrations.

"The climate crisis is a universal threat to humankind and we all have a responsibility to deal with it as rapidly as we can," Kerry said in a visit to Beijing last summer, when he met with Vice President Han Zheng on climate matters. At international climate summits, Kerry always kept a breakneck pace, going from one meeting to another, with world leaders, major business figures and scientists, all interspersed with one press conference after another — to share what he just learned, announce an initiative, or say a few words as civil groups announced their own plans to help combat climate change, thus lending his credibility and weight.

In the span of an hour, at one meeting Kerry would talk in detail about the need for oil companies to drastically reduce methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, then go to another gathering and detail

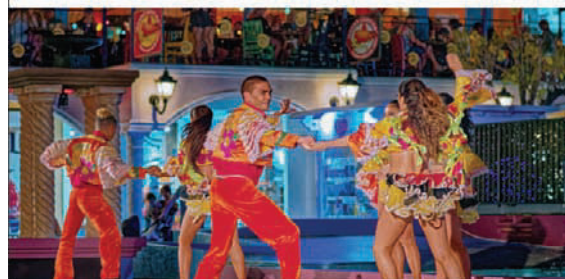
his latest idea to help pay for green energy transition in developing countries and then, some minutes later, go into a long explanation of illegal fishing around the world while attending an event with leaders of Pacific Island nations.

"John Kerry's tireless work to deliver global progress on the climate crisis has been heroic," former Vice President Al Gore, who has focused primarily on climate in his post-public office life, said in a statement Saturday. "He has approached this challenge with bold vision, resolute determination, and the urgency that this crisis demands. For that the U.S. and the whole world owe him a huge debt of gratitude."

While his gravitas has made him a central climate figure around the world, Kerry also has strong critics who argue America's climate policies don't amount to leadership in fighting global warming. □



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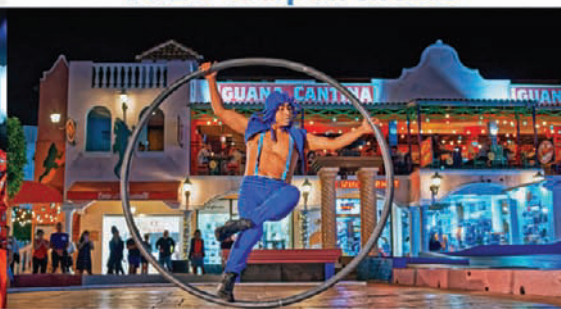
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As shutdown looms, congressional leaders ready stopgap bill to extend government funding to March



Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., heads to the chamber at the Capitol in Washington, Friday, Jan. 12, 2024.

Associated Press

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional leaders are preparing a stopgap bill to keep the federal government running into March and avoid a partial shutdown next week.

The temporary measure will run to March 1 for some federal agencies whose approved funds are set to run out Friday and extend the remainder of government operations to March

8. That's according to a person familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it.

The stopgap bill, expected to be released Sunday, would come as House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has been under pressure from his hard-right flank in recent days to jettison a recent bipartisan spending deal with Senate Democrats. The bill would need Democratic support to pass the narrowly divided House. □

States with big climate goals strip local power to block green projects

Continued from Front

"There are people in this township I will never, ever speak to again," she said. Local restrictions in Michigan derailed more than two dozen utility-scale renewable energy projects as of last May, according to a study by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University. Nationwide, and at least 228 restrictions in 35 states have been imposed to stop green energy projects. The conflicts have hindered many states' aggressive timelines for transitioning to cleaner energy production, with the ultimate goal of eliminating carbon pollution within the next two decades.

Michigan and more than a dozen other states are seeking to upend the decision-making process by grabbing the power to supersede local restrictions and allow state authorities to approve or disapprove locations for utility-scale projects.

The shift has sparked a political backlash that may escalate as more states seek to simplify getting green energy projects approved and built.

"We can't allow projects of statewide importance that are critical to our state energy security to be vetoed on purely local concerns," said Dan Scripps, chair of Michigan's Public Service Commission.

Scripps and two other commission members now have the power to site large-scale renewable energy projects in the state under legislation passed by Michigan lawmakers and signed by Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in November.

Michigan joined Connecticut, New York, Oregon and Minnesota in requiring utility providers to transition to 100% carbon-free electricity generation by 2040. A sixth state, Rhode Island, is shooting for 100% renewable energy by 2033. The goals are consistent with the Biden administration's target of carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035 and a net-zero emissions economy



Wind turbines are scattered across farmland near Port Austin, Mich. Dec. 3, 2014.

Associated Press

by 2050. Other states have long-standing goals lower than 100%.

But many local officials say giving states the power to site large-scale energy projects clashes with cherished U.S. political principles. Local officials, they say, are the public servants closest to and most directly accountable to voters. They argue that's especially important when it comes to land use and what gets built near homes.

In Kansas, Osage County's moratorium on commercial solar and wind projects came in 2022 after multiple hearings. County Commissioner Jay Bailey said the decision reflected most residents' concerns. Even after all the hearings and discussions, he said he just didn't feel he had enough information about the effects of large turbines or solar farms. "Here's the difference," he said. "If you allow them, you can't go back and change it, but if you don't allow them, you can always change it."

In other places, such as the Flint Hills of Kansas — home to most of the nation's remaining tall grass prairie — moratoriums on energy projects stem from environmental concerns.

But even with the restrictions in place in parts of Kansas, renewable energy has

boomed there. Wind farms now provide 47% of the state's electricity, up from 7% in 2010. The gains came as the clean energy lobby worked steadily to counter opposition from the state's Republican-controlled Legislature.

Elise Caplan, vice president for regulatory affairs at the nonprofit American Council on Renewable Energy, said local rules restricting green energy facilities are "not really based on science." Projects can benefit local environments by retiring generating plants powered by fossil fuels, she said.

Michigan has pursued its clean-energy goals by rapidly developing facilities where there's ample farmland. It's a choice that can divide rural communities, as it did in the Monroe County case in which Ostrander sought to lease property for a solar farm.

Michigan's new siting law could revive the project.

"No one's forcing this on us," Ostrander said. "This was something we decided and felt it would be good for us to build to keep our property in the family."

Michigan is unusual in that its more than 1,200 townships have the power to enact and enforce zoning ordinances. Twenty of the state's 83 counties have passed ordinances block-

ing or delaying wind or solar developments.

Scripps, the chair of Michigan's Public Service Commission that can now override those restrictions, has said an additional 209,000 acres (84,579 hectares) will be needed for projects to hit the state's 60% renewable energy goal by 2035. It's a massive increase from the 17,000 acres (6,880 hectares) currently being used. Developers will still need to go through local communities to approve projects, Scripps said. But if the project is denied, and meets the state's criteria to proceed, the three-person commission can overrule the local decision and approve solar projects with a capacity of 50 megawatts or greater and wind projects with a capacity of 100 megawatts.

A 2023 law in Illinois limits local authorities' power and bans moratoriums on clean-energy projects. In addition to Michigan, the Columbia University study reported that state boards or agencies in California, Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island control decisions about siting projects. Local rules also can be bypassed by the state in Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Florida and South Dakota. Local government groups in

Michigan have overwhelmingly opposed the new law giving the state power to site projects, saying it creates a "one-size-fits-all" process. Citizens for Local Choice, a group with four state lawmakers, announced in early January that it will try put the issue before Michigan voters in November, which would require collecting nearly 357,000 signatures by May 29.

Green energy advocates are frustrated by what they often see driving local opposition to projects: A fear of change, widely circulating misinformation about wind turbines and solar panels and a desire by suburbanites who move to rural areas to preserve views.

Josh Svaty, who assists renewable energy companies seeking county-level approval and lobbies for them at the Kansas Statehouse, decries how opponents can make local officials' lives "absolutely miserable." Yet, he said, he still believes in local decision making.

"County governments — city governments, the same way — they are designed to be accessible to their citizens," Svaty said. "So you can go to that planning and zoning meeting and if you want to say your view, you can do that." □

Judge says Trump can wait a week to testify at sex abuse victim's defamation trial

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump can wait a week to testify at a New York defamation trial where he could face millions of dollars in damages after a jury concluded that he sexually abused a columnist in the 1990s, a federal judge said Sunday. Judge Lewis A. Kaplan issued a one-page order saying Trump could testify on Jan. 22 even if the trial that starts Tuesday is over by Thursday, except for testimony by the Republican front-runner in this year's presidential race.

He said he previously denied Trump's request to delay the start of the trial by a week so Trump could attend the funeral Thursday of his mother-in-law because it would disrupt and inconvenience prospective jurors, lawyers, court staff and security, who were notified of the trial date seven months ago.

The judge also noted that he has learned that Trump, even while seeking to postpone the trial, had scheduled an evening campaign appearance on Wednesday in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He said



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump participates in a virtual rally at Hotel Fort Des Moines in Des Moines, Iowa, Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024.

Associated Press

Trump's lawyers notified the judge on Friday that Trump planned to attend the trial. A jury to be chosen Tuesday prior to opening statements will hear evidence pertaining to \$10 million in compensatory damages and millions more in punitive damages requested by attorneys for columnist E. Jean Carroll.

Carroll, 80, won a \$5 million sex abuse and defamation judgment in May from

a civil jury that heard her testify that Trump attacked her sexually in the dressing room of a luxury department store in midtown Manhattan in spring 1996 after they had a chance meeting that was lighthearted before turning violent.

Trump did not attend that trial and has repeatedly said he never knew Carroll and believed she made up her claims to promote a 2019 memoir in which

she first made them publicly and to damage him politically. The jury rejected Carroll's claim that Trump raped her as rape is defined by New York state law but agreed that he sexually abused her in the department store and defamed her with statements he made in October 2022. This month's trial, long delayed by appeals, stems from defamatory comments the judge said Trump

made about Carroll in 2019 and last May, a day after the jury announced its verdict.

Kaplan ruled last year that the trial starting Tuesday only will pertain to damages because the prior jury's findings about sexual abuse and defamation can be accepted for purposes of the new trial.

Earlier on Sunday, Trump attorney Alina Habba objected to restrictions on Trump's testimony requested by an attorney for Carroll, saying that despite instructions already given by the judge, Trump can "still offer considerable testimony in his defense."

She noted that someone seeking punitive damages in a defamation case in New York state must show that libelous statements were made out of hatred, ill will or spite and said Trump should be allowed to offer evidence and testimony about whether hatred or ill will was behind his comments to reporters.

Habba said Trump also can testify about the circumstances of his comments and how they related to comments in Carroll's "continuous parade of interviews and publicity." □

Record high tide in Maine washes away 3 historic fishing shacks



A fishing shack floats away into Casco Bay during a storm in South Portland, Maine, Saturday Jan. 13, 2024.

Associated Press

By **NICK PERRY**

Associated Press

MEREDITH, N.H. (AP) — A record high tide in Maine

washed away three historic fishing shacks that had stood since the 1800s and formed the backdrop of

countless photographs. Michelle Erskine said she was visiting fisherman's point at Willard Beach in South Portland on Saturday when she captured video footage of the last two wooden shacks sliding into the ocean.

"Oh no. They're both going. Oh no!" she can be heard saying on the video.

Erskine, who has lived in South Portland all her life, said her son had his senior photos taken at the shacks and wedding parties often visited them.

"It's truly a sad day for the community and the residents of South Portland," Erskine said in an interview with The Associated Press on Sunday. "History is just being washed away."

The shacks, owned by the city of South Portland, had just undergone a facelift in October when they were repainted.

They were the last in a series of fishing shacks that predate the city's incorporation after they were first built along the shore and then moved to their most recent location in the 1880s. Erskine said they once housed lobster traps and fishing gear. Two shacks were destroyed in an earlier storm in 1978.

A record 14.57-foot (4.4-meter) high tide was measured in Portland, Maine, just after noon on Saturday, after a storm surge amplified what was already the month's highest tide, said National Weather Service meteorol-

ogist Michael Cempa. That broke the previous record of 14.17 feet (4.3 meters) set in 1978 and was the highest since measurements began in 1912. Cempa said the tide gauge measures the difference between the high tide and the average low tide.

The surge flooded some homes in Orchard Beach and Kennebunkport in Maine, and Hampton Beach in New Hampshire. It came just days after a previous storm damaged one of Maine's most beloved lighthouses which is featured on the state quarter.

"Very sadly, all three fishing shacks at Willard Beach have been completely destroyed," the city wrote on its Facebook page. □

Taiwan president-elect Lai Ching-te has steered the island toward democracy and away from China

By SIMINA MISTREANU and
ADAM SCHRECK

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Lai Ching-te, Taiwan's president-elect, has vowed to safeguard the island's de-facto independence from China and further align it with other democracies.

Lai, 64, emerged victorious in the election Saturday on the island of 23 million people that China claims as its own. He is currently vice president with the Democratic Progressive Party, which has rejected China's sovereignty claims over Taiwan.

As he faced his supporters Saturday night, Lai vowed Taiwan would "continue to walk side by side with democracies from around the world."

"We are telling the international community that between democracy and authoritarianism, we will stand on the side of democracy," he said.

Lai has vowed to strengthen the island's defense and economy, which depends heavily on trade with China. He has also made an effort to soften his earlier stance as a "pragmatic worker for Taiwan independence."

At the same time, the new president has expressed desire to restart dialogue with China, which has refused to communicate with the island's leaders in recent



Taiwanese Vice President Lai Ching-te, also known as William Lai, left, celebrates his victory with running mate Bi-khim Hsiao in Taipei, Taiwan, Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024.

Associated Press

years.

"We are ready and willing to engage to show more for the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Peace is priceless and war has no winners," he said earlier in the week.

His chances of success in talking to China, however, are close to null, analysts say. "Beijing has repeatedly criticized not just DPP more broadly, but has actually criticized Lai Ching-te by name," said Wen-Ti Sung, a fellow with U.S. think tank Atlantic Council. "It's something that Beijing usually only does

when they think there's very little chance of the two sides ever repairing ties."

Instead, Sung added, China will likely resort to a "maximum pressure campaign," including military and economic coercion.

As vice president, Lai helped promote Taiwan's interests internationally.

He stopped in New York and San Francisco on his way to Latin America in August in a move that was criticized by Beijing.

That visit was part of a diplomatic mission to Paraguay, one of a dozen countries

that still maintains formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Many countries, including the U.S., formally recognize the People's Republic of China but maintain unofficial ties with Taiwan. Lai said at the time that it was important to meet foreign counterparts to convey the message that Taiwan "persists in its democracy, human rights and freedom and actively takes part in international affairs."

U.S. President Joe Biden was asked about the election in Taiwan as he left the White House on Saturday to spend

the weekend at Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland.

"We do not support independence," he said.

U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson said he will be asking the chairs of the relevant House committees to lead a delegation to Taipei following Lai's inauguration in May. Lai has pointed to China's firing of missiles and other military drills in the Taiwan Strait in 1996 as a "defining moment" that drew him into politics.

In an opinion piece in The Wall Street Journal in July, he vowed to maintain the status quo, saying that was in the best interests of Taiwan and international community. He also drew a line between Taiwan and Ukraine and the rise of authoritarianism globally "have awakened the international community to the fragility of democracy." In that article, he called for a buildup of Taiwan's military deterrence capabilities, strengthening economic security, forging partnerships with democracies worldwide and "steady and principled cross-strait leadership."

Lai has held several prominent jobs in addition to vice president, including premier, legislator and mayor of the southern city of Tainan. He originally is a physician and has a master's in public health from Harvard. □

U.N. sets December deadline for its peacekeepers in Congo to completely withdraw

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) —

The U.N. peacekeeping mission in Congo, which helped in the fight against rebels for more than two decades before being asked by the Congolese government to leave, will complete its withdrawal from the Central African nation by the end of 2024, the mission said Saturday.

A three-phased withdrawal of the 15,000-force will begin in the South Kivu province where at least 2,000

security personnel will leave by the end of April in the first phase, according to Bintou Keita, head of the mission known as MONUSCO, after which forces in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces will also leave.

"After 25 years of presence, MONUSCO will definitively leave the DRC no later than the end of 2024," Keita said at a media briefing in the Congolese capital of Kinshasa. The end of the mission will not be "the end

of the United Nations" in the country, she added.

The U.N. and Congolese officials worked together to produce a disengagement plan for "a progressive, responsible, honorable and exemplary withdrawal of MONUSCO," Congolese Foreign Minister Christophe Lutundula said. Modalities have also been set for "the gradual transfer of tasks from MONUSCO to Congolese government," Lutundula added.



MONUSCO blue helmet deployed near Kibumba, north of Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Jan. 28, 2022.

Associated Press

The MONUSCO force arrived in Congo in 2010 after taking over from an earlier U.N. peacekeeping mission to protect civilians and hu-

manitarian personnel and to support the Congolese government in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts. □

Maldives leader demands removal of Indian military from the archipelago by mid-March amid spat

By **MOHAMED SHARUHAN**
Associated Press

MALE, Maldives (AP) — Maldives' President Mohamed Muizzu wants the Indian military personnel stationed in his archipelago nation withdrawn by March 15, an official with his office said Sunday.

Abdulla Nazim Ibrahim, a presidential aide, told reporters that Muizzu proposed the removal at a meeting with officials of the Indian Embassy in the Maldives and other visiting Indian officials.

The move comes a day after Muizzu returned from China, India's regional rival, and made comments critical of India.

Muizzu said his country's small size is not a license for anyone to bully the Maldives. His comments were an apparent response to social media calls in India to boycott Maldives tourism after three Maldives deputy ministers made derogatory posts on social media against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The dispute began last week when Modi posted pictures on X, formerly known as Twitter, of himself strolling on the beach and snorkeling in Lakshadweep,



Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu speaks during a plenary session at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit, Friday, Dec. 1, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Associated Press

an Indian archipelago that his government believes has untapped potential for tourism.

Some in the Maldives saw it as an attempt to lure tourists away from its sandy white beaches and luxury island resorts.

Muizzu suspended the deputy ministers, saying their comments did not reflect government policy. However, Muizzu on his return from China announced plans to free Maldives of its

dependence on India and find alternate places for Maldivians to obtain education and health services and import staples and medicines.

Currently, Maldivians go to hospitals in India and Sri Lanka under the government-sponsored free health program and many of the country's staple foods are imported from India.

Muizzu said Maldivians will now be able to also go to

hospitals in Thailand and the United Arab Emirates and staples will be imported from Turkey. He also said medicines will be imported directly from manufacturers in Europe and the United States.

India sent the highest number of tourists to the Maldives last year with a share of 11%. But Muizzu said China used to send the most before the pandemic and steps will be taken to double that number.

India and China are competing for influence in the Maldives, which is located strategically along a key shipping route between the east and the west.

At least 75 Indian military personnel are stationed in the Maldives and Muizzu, who is considered pro-China, campaigned on a promise of removing them in the run-up to the presidential election last November. His party had waged an "India Out" campaign for months.

Muizzu had accused his election rival and predecessor of compromising national sovereignty by allowing India to have its military personnel in the Maldivian islands.

Known activities of the Indian military include operating two aircraft donated by India and assisting in the rescue of people stranded or faced with calamities at sea.

Regarding the donated aircraft, Ibrahim said: "If military personnel are here, military people will have to leave this country and it's okay if civilians ... are here to operate them, that's what's being discussed in these meetings." □



People watch from the north as the volcano erupts near Grindavík, Iceland, Sunday Jan. 14, 2024.

Associated Press

By **MARCO DI MARCO**
Associated Press

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — A volcano in southwestern Iceland erupted for the second time in less than a month on Sunday, sending lava snaking toward a nearby com-

munity and setting at least one home on fire.

The eruption, which began just before 8 a.m. local time, came after authorities evacuated the town of Grindavik following a swarm of small earthquakes, the Icelandic

A volcano erupts in southwestern Iceland, sending lava flowing toward a nearby settlement

Meteorological Office said. Hours later, a second fissure opened near the edge of town and lava crept toward the homes. "We just watch it on the cameras and there's really nothing else we can do," Grindavik resident Reynir Berg Jónsson told Iceland's RUV television.

Grindavik is a town of 3,800 people about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of Reykjavik, Iceland's capital. The community was previously evacuated in November following a series of earthquakes that opened large cracks in the earth between the town and Sýlingarfell, a small mountain to the north. The nearby Blue Lagoon

geothermal spa — one of Iceland's biggest tourist attractions — also closed temporarily.

The volcano eventually erupted on Dec. 18, and residents were allowed to return to their homes on Dec. 22. In the weeks since then, emergency workers have been building defensive walls around Grindavik, but the barriers weren't complete and lava is moving toward the community, the meteorological office said. Before last month's eruption, the Svartsengi volcanic system north of Grindavik had been dormant for around 780 years. The volcano is just a few kilometers west

of Fagradalsfjall, which was dormant for 6,000 years before flaring to life in March 2021.

Unlike the previous event, Saturday's eruption at Svartsengi produced a "very rapid flow" of lava that moved south toward Grindavik, said Kristín Jónsdóttir of the Met Office.

"Luckily, we got some warnings, so we got increased earthquake activity, and this was all communicated towards the civil protection, so the town of Grindavik was evacuated," she said.

Iceland, which sits above a volcanic hot spot in the North Atlantic, averages one eruption every four to five years. □

Aruba's underwater wonderland

ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy.



Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water



has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □



Asian Caribbean Impressions Menu

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Rhythms Circus Company Aruba: putting Aruba's name on the world stage



Rhythms Circus Company Aruba is a talented group of young people working daily to present their art in the form of acrobatics, dancing, acting and singing. After an impactful participation in one of America's biggest talent shows, they are now bringing their amazing talent to Aruba!

In a show full of light, music, and with performances to famous musical figures like Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson and Tina Turner, the group consisting of 15 people from various countries delights the audience with their artistic prowess at the Paseo Herencia Mall, every Wednesday and Friday starting at 7pm. Each day has a different show, so you can attend both nights for the complete experience!

RCCA also offers the possibility for you and your family to enjoy dinner before the show! Starting from 6pm, you and your family can delight from the wide-ranged menu that includes a variation of delicious main course meals complete with a delectable flan dessert as a sweet treat. Enjoy your dinner even more at a VIP table complete with comfort seating!

The group, under the leadership of directors and creators Diego Jaramillo and Yamila Hernandez are opening the doors to the ballroom to our local audience as well as our visitors so that everyone can have the privilege of experiencing this wonderful show.

Hernandez explained that the idea for this project started in 2010 when she came to work in Aruba. After being on the island for a while she decided to stay and live here, and she met Diego Jaramillo, who is currently her partner. Together they came with the idea to establish a company together with other professional artists, with the goal of living from their art.

Hernandez says that the work is hard – all of the performers are professional artists, and while the production of the show is not a challenge for them, selling the idea proved difficult since at the time, there weren't any shows of its kind on the island.

America's Got Talent

Currently they are offering a show with music, choreography and at the end, they have

a shocking acrobatics ending, one that was seen by thousands of people around the world when the group travelled to Los Angeles in the United States to represent Aruba in America's Got Talent. Hernandez said that the show was very important for them to meet the public present because people could experience this performance live and right before their eyes.

Their presentation in America's Got Talent "was incredible" and they were able to meet the jury and many other artists staying there for three months. But the exhaustion and physical toll was so great that Diego suffered an accident, and because of this, they had to cancel all future commitments.

Reservations and tickets

To make a reservation to see this incredible display of creativity and acrobatics, scan the QR code which will take you directly to their website for a booking. To find more information about RCCA, please visit their Instagram page @rcccaruba.□



Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building "Cocolishi", is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called "Willem III Toren". Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is.

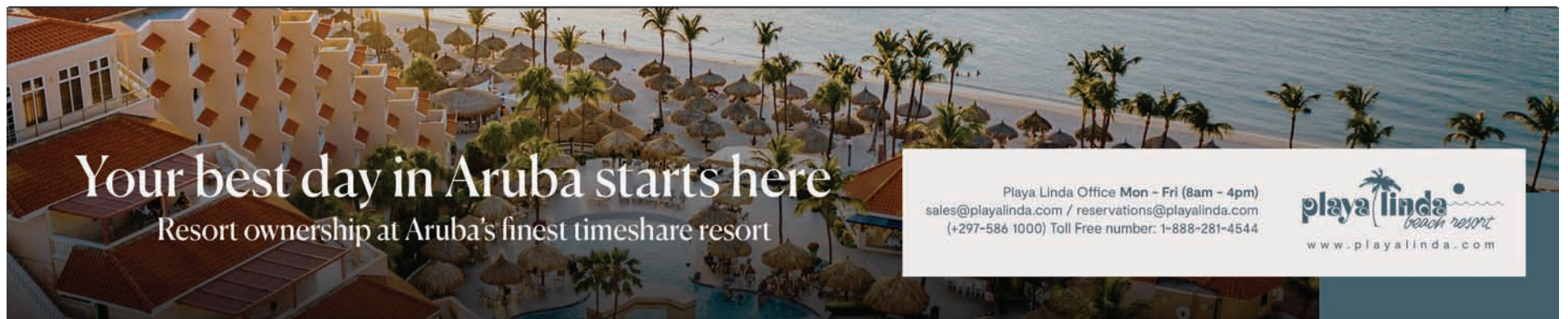
Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial,



military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.□

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.



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Aruba's most family-friendly beaches

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when travelling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas
Baby Beach is one of Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay,

like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for

kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area

Yet another highly popular beach site, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay

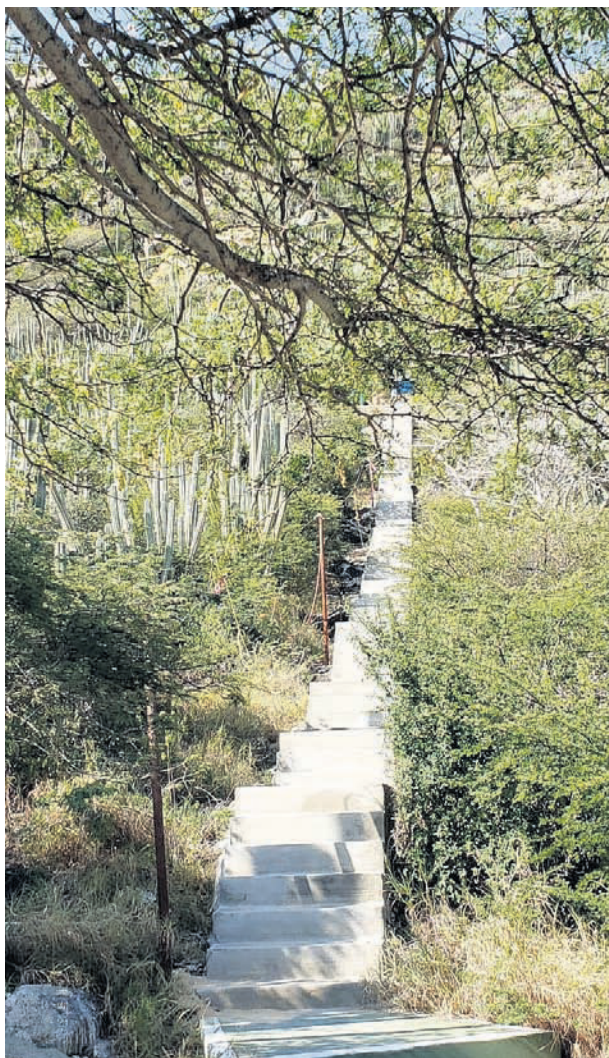


beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

Palm Island

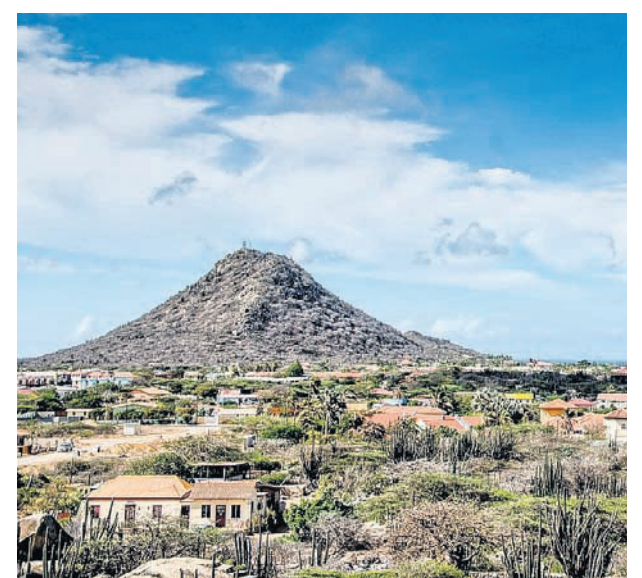
Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingoes up close! □

Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill



(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park. The staircase that runs on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see. The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □





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XCI - 91 Black witch moth

ORANJESTAD — The black witch moth is a fantastic animal that flaps its wing just like some bats do. And since it has a wing span of circa 18cm and being mostly a nocturnal creature, people mistakenly associate them with bats. Moths and butterflies symbolize hope, transformation, and new beginnings.



However when I had one black moth landing on me, those who were with me made me very curious regarding their reaction and what it meant for them since they panicked in terror. This because of what they have been taught through folk stories by their elders. However, reality is that the black witch moth is a completely harm-

less animal. An encounter with a black moth can indicate that the person is about to be reborn or renewed in some way. Sometimes there is darkness before the dawn. Black moths are also symbolizing longevity for some cultures.

Moths and Butterflies are recognized as a symbol of transformation. The word transform is metamorpho in Greek, from which we get the English term metamorphosis. It describes the type of change a caterpillar undergoes to get its wings to fly. This process is comparable or similar to how a human being becomes a spirit in the afterlife. Ancient Greeks believed to be the essence of a person itself. The Greeks usually portray Psyche, their goddess of the soul, with wings.

Through the years, the meaning of the moth and the

butterfly became varied, depending on their colors. In the Philippines, China and Central America varieties of dark moths and butterflies are associated with death. The Philippine culture has many superstitious beliefs or "pamahiin" and among the most enduring of these is the belief that this animal is a sign of a dead relatives making their presence felt. In Ireland, black butterflies symbolize a restless soul of a deceased person unable to move on. Meanwhile, white butterflies portray the soul of a deceased child. In Japan, white butterflies also represent the soul of a de-

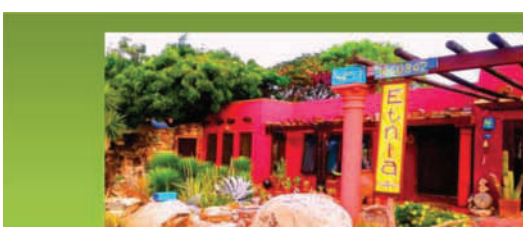
ceased person. In Germany, butterflies are believed to be the soul of a deceased child as well.

Mexican folk stories tells us about "la mariposa de la muerte" (butterfly of death). The story tells that if a person is sick and this moth fly's into his house the sick person will die.

For the Aruban a black moth or butterfly is a bad omen. Moreover, if you cross paths with a black butterfly, you should prepare for a negative turn of events for many. Although this common superstition in particular has been around for many years since we can find its origins in native Aruban myths and folk stories, the true is that the fluttering of its fragile wings should make us take note of what is happening around us: they are heralds and also victims of over development and climate change. □

To get to know a little more regarding Aruba's and its cultural origins, we highly recommend you to book and participate in a cultural encounter session to remember.

A mind opening revelation and entertaining island experience. Mail us at etniana-tiva03@gmail.com.



Article by: Etnia Nativa

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Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called Did you know about...?, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is placa. Cents are called cen (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called Dos placa; 10-cent coins were called debchi; 25-cent coins were called diez



placa and the 50-cent coin was once called Yotin (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often

depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a *Turtuga blanco* (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of

mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called *Shoshoro*. The birds *Trupiaal*, *Shoco*, rock drawings, and the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a *Purun di ceramica* (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the *Cododo* (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), *Cangreu di tera* (land crab), *Willem III Tower*, and again the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called *Banana di rif*. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the *Yuwana* (iguana), *Aloe*, *Toteki* (lizard), the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the *Baile di cinta* (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the *Dornasol* and the *Warawara*—both local birds, along with the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, the *Tuna cactus* plant, and the *Caha di orgel* (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

the word "florin" supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word "florino", both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Assess
 - 5 Damon of "The Martian"
 - 9 Daughter of Barack and Michelle
 - 10 Steer clear of
 - 12 Does book work
 - 13 Passionate dance
 - 14 Cause championed by Martin Luther King Jr.
 - 16 That girl
 - 17 Departed
 - 18 Puts a cap on
 - 21 Scrollwork shape
 - 22 Adversaries
 - 23 Hoopster
 - 24 Chuckles
 - 26 Nile serpent
 - 29 Of the best quality
 - 30 Largest continent
 - 31 In the past
 - 32 What tourists see
 - 34 Tossed
 - 37 Shakespeare's "—"
 - Andronicus"

DOWN

- 1 Hams' needs
- 2 Straightens
- 3 Church contribution
- 4 Sunrise site
- 5 Yoga need
- 6 Director DuVernay
- 7 Throat mass
- 8 Dancer's wear
- 9 On-ramp sign
- 11 Some deer
- 15 Insults
- 19 Singer Burl
- 20 Spoil
- 22 Hobo attire
- 23 Stage signal
- 24 Beacons
- 25 Hooded jacket
- 26 TV's Kutcher
- 27 They target abs
- 28 Out of style
- 29 Music's Waller
- 30 Nimble
- 33 Article
- 35 Quarterback Manning
- 36 Dripping

S	A	L	E		F	L	E	A	S
P	R	O	M	S		R	A	N	D
R	I	G	U	P		E	X	T	O
A	S	S		R	U	T		A	P
Y	E	O	M	A	N		P	I	T
	S	N	O	W	B	A	L	L	S
		P	L	A	Z	A			
		I	C	E	S	K	A	T	E
S	T	U	D		E	L	E	C	T
M	A	R		O	D	E		L	A
A	L	L	E	N		A	V	A	N
S	I	E	V	E		S	E	I	Z
H	A	D	E	S			E	R	A

Saturday's answer

	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	
9						10				11
12						13				
14					15			16		
17					18	19	20			
21				22						
			23							
	24	25					26	27	28	
29						30				
31					32	33				
34			35	36		37				
38						39				
	40					41				

1-15

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-15

CRYPTOQUOTE

L AVLCG KJCSJMX'T VJTWNT

JCU QSTW UEZC UNHNIANM'T

HWNNGT. — TJCEANM GWJC

Saturday's Cryptoquote: THEY WHO SING THROUGH THE SUMMER MUST DANCE IN THE WINTER. — ITALIAN PROVERB

Cellebrite donates AI investigative tools to nonprofits to help find missing children faster

By GLENN GAMBOA

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — John Walsh, advocate for missing children and longtime host of "America's Most Wanted," said he feels outmanned by criminals all the time — especially in the courtroom. "I say to myself, 'My god, the lawyer for this dirtbag predator is smarter and more sophisticated than the cops are,'" the co-founder of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children told The Associated Press. "They don't really know the technology."

Human traffickers and sexual predators often use high-end technology and increasingly take advantage of encryption to protect the details of their crimes, Walsh said. And even if they didn't, law enforcement officials, especially in smaller cities and towns, lack the budget and the access to the technological tools that would speed up the investigation and aid in the prosecution of the offenders. Cellebrite DI, Ltd., wants to change that. The provider of digital tools that help law enforcement and private firms find and follow investigative leads on Friday launched "Operation Find Them All" — an initiative where the firm will donate its technology to nonprofits that help find endangered children, including the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, the nonprofit The Exodus Road, which fights human trafficking around the world. The NASDAQ-traded company — which reported revenue of \$85 million for the third quarter of 2023, up 17% year over year — will also



This 2019 photo provided by Cellebrite DI, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children Co-Founder John Walsh (left) and Cellebrite DI Co-Founder Yossi Carmil meet in Israel in 2019.

Associated Press

make a financial donation to those organizations, as well as Raven, a political nonprofit that raises awareness of the threat of child exploitation online. Yossi Carmil, Cellebrite's CEO, said the FBI had nearly 360,000 cases of missing children in 2022, while the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children received more than 32 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation that year. Knowing that his company had the technology that could help children in trouble, Carmil said he felt Cellebrite had to do what it could.

"We are the biggest admirers of law enforcement," Carmil said. "However, they are understaffed, under-equipped, and, at any point of time, regardless of how much the government will give them, they are under constraints. They always need to do more with less."

Kent Nielsen, digital forensic investigator for the Brazoria County Sheriff's Office in Texas, said his department currently uses Cellebrite

technology to process data gathered from cell phones as well as its AI-driven software to analyze the data to find potential leads.

"The system really helps us with doing our jobs faster," said Nielsen, adding that one smartphone could contain more than 250,000 images to process. Rather than having an investigator look through those images and sort them, Cellebrite's Pathfinder software can handle it, while also linking them to locations, as well as other data from other smartphones or other cases.

The Brazoria County Sheriff's Office used the Cellebrite technology last weekend as part of the multi-agency Operation Interception to help rescue children being trafficked, as many visited the area due to the College Football Playoff national championship held in nearby Houston. Nielsen said seven girls were rescued and 23 arrests were made.

Matt Parker, co-founder of The Exodus Road, said he saw what a difference one piece of Cellebrite technology made in investigating the human trafficking of Rohingya Muslims in Malaysia in 2015. Through "Operation Find Them All," Parker hopes to bring Cellebrite technology to other countries, even if the governments have previously not prosecuted human trafficking cases. □

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24/7

The largest great ape to ever live went extinct because of climate change, study finds

By CHRISTINA LARSON

AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — An ancient species of great ape was likely driven to extinction hundreds of thousands of years ago when climate change put their favorite fruits out of reach during dry seasons, scientists reported Wednesday. The species *Gigantopithecus blacki*, which once lived in southern China, represents the largest great ape known to scientists — standing 10 feet tall (3 meters) and weighing up to 650 pounds (295 kilograms). But its size may also have been a weakness.

"It's just a massive animal — just really, really big," said Renaud Joannes-Boyau, a researcher at Australia's Southern Cross University and co-author of the study published in the journal *Nature*. "When food starts to be scarce, it's so big it can't climb trees to explore new food sources."

The giant apes, which likely resembled modern orangutans, survived for around 2 million years on the forested plains of China's Guangxi region. They ate vegetarian diets, munching on fruits and flowers in tropical forests, until the environment began to change.

The researchers analyzed pollen and sediment samples preserved in Guangxi's caves, as well as fossil teeth,



This illustration provided by researchers depicts *Gigantopithecus blacki* in a forest in the Guangxi region of southern China. Associated Press

to unravel how forests produced fewer fruits starting around 600,000 years ago, as the region experienced more dry seasons.

The giant apes didn't vanish quickly, but likely went extinct sometime between 215,000 and 295,000 years ago, the researchers found. While smaller apes may have been able to climb trees to search for different food, the researchers' analysis shows the giant apes ate more tree bark, reeds and other non-nutritious food.

"When the forest changed, there was not enough food preferred by the species," said co-author Zhang Yingqi of China's Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology. Most of what scientists know about the extinct great

apes comes from studying fossil teeth and four large lower jaw bones, all found in southern China. No complete skeletons have been found.

Between around 2 million and 22 million years ago, several dozen species of great apes inhabited Africa, Europe and Asia, fossil records show. Today, only gorillas, chimpanzees,

bonobos, orangutans and humans remain.

While the first humans emerged in Africa, scientists don't know on which continent the great ape family first arose, said Rick Potts, who directs the Human Origins Program at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and was not involved in the study. □



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WK 52 Ocean View \$60,000
WK 7 and 14 - all views

GOLD SEASON

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3 Bed Ocean View \$20,000

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Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Baker Mayfield (6) passes against the Carolina Panthers during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, in Charlotte, N.C.

Associated Press

Baker Mayfield focused on defeating Eagles in playoffs, not his future with Buccaneers

By FRED GOODALL
AP Sports Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — A rejuvenated Baker Mayfield says he's focused on defeating the Philadelphia Eagles, not the future of a career he's revived by leading the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to the NFL playoffs.

The No. 1 overall pick from the 2018 draft arguably has had his best season as a pro, guiding the resurgent Bucs (9-8) to what six weeks ago seemed an unlikely prospect — a third straight division title and a wild-card matchup Monday night against the reeling defending NFC champion Eagles (11-6).

Since joining Tampa Bay on a one-year, \$4 million contract last March, Mayfield has positioned himself for a possible long-term deal with the Bucs or perhaps another club impressed with the way he's bounced back from less successful stints with Cleveland, Carolina and the Los Angeles Rams.

"It's meant the world to me just to be able to be in a stable place, to be the best version of myself (and) to (do) what they've enabled me

to do. The organization, the staff, our locker room — it's just a special place, so I've truly appreciated it," Mayfield said.

"I hope the guys know that. I try to reflect that with just who I am every day coming to work, bringing energy and passion into it," the 28-year-old quarterback added. "It's been great for me, but (we're) not done yet."

Tom Brady led Tampa Bay to a Super Bowl title and three postseason berths from 2020-22 before retiring after an opening-round playoff loss to the Dallas Cowboys a year ago.

Mayfield, meanwhile, split time last season between the Panthers and Rams, going a combined 2-8 as a starter. When he signed with the Bucs and went on to win Brady's old job in training camp, few people envisioned the team being successful enough to finish with a winning record, much less a franchise-best fourth consecutive playoff berth. Coach Todd Bowles, however, not only viewed Mayfield as a good fit for a new system being installed by

first-year offensive coordinator Dave Canales but for a locker room that's been transformed from one of the oldest in the NFL to one of the youngest since Brady's departure.

Star receivers Mike Evans and Chris Godwin remain, as do defensive standouts Vita Vea, Lavonte David, Shaquil Barrett, Devin White and Antoine Winfield Jr.

Mayfield has prospered because of contributions from younger players such as second-year running back Rachaad White and the development of tight end Cade Otton and rookie defensive starters Calijah Kancey and Yaya Diaby.

One of the best things the quarterback did to win over teammates was not try to be like Brady.

"I think he's relatable because he's different, and I think we have a different team," Bowles said. "I think we needed to go a different way. It's worked out for us. The attitude that he brought in, I think would be infectious on a young or an older team. I think that's just who he is."

"That part is not that big of a deal, but the leadership he's shown and the way we've tried to change the team around has been outstanding. He leads the veterans, as well. He sits with the offense and the defense," the coach added.

"He really brought camaraderie and chemistry together in the offseason, as well as summer training camp, to have these guys on the same page so that when we hit hard times, we wouldn't panic."

Although his performance in games has been uneven at times, Mayfield completed 64% of his passes for career bests of 4,044 yards and 28 touchdowns. He also cut down of some of the costly mistakes that hindered him in previous stops.

To win the NFC South and land the No. 4 seed in the conference, the Bucs rebounded from a stretch in which they lost six of seven to go 5-1 over the final six weeks.

Mayfield's start on Monday night against the Eagles, who were on track for the top seed before going 1-5 down the stretch to tumble to No. 5, will be his first in the playoffs since competing with the Browns in 2020.

"Those are all great things. I'm not going to not acknowledge it, at least, but our goal is much bigger than just winning the division and for me to have a great year," Mayfield said. "We expected that within this building. We're in the playoffs now, so it's singular focus on the Eagles." □



Boston Bruins head coach Jim Montgomery, center, speaks with members of the team in the third period of an NHL hockey game against the Pittsburgh Penguins, Thursday, Jan. 4, 2024, in Boston.

Associated Press

Bowness, Tocchet, Montgomery and Laviolette are the coaches for the NHL All-Star Game

NEW YORK (AP) — Rick Bowness of the Winnipeg Jets and Rick Tocchet of the Vancouver Canucks will join Boston's Jim Montgomery and Peter Laviolette of the New York Rangers as the head coaches for the NHL All-Star Game. The league said Sunday the coaches of the teams with the highest points percentage in each of the four divisions through Saturday's games will guide the four All-Star rosters for the Feb. 3 event in Toronto.

The Central Division-leading Jets (28-10-4) have the best points percentage in the NHL at .714. The Pacific Division-leading Canucks (29-11-3) are next at .709, ahead of the Atlantic Division-leading Bruins (.702, 25-8-9) and the Metropolitan Division-leading Rangers (.667, 27-13-2).

Laviolette is making his fourth All-Star appearance as a head coach (2011, 2015, 2018), tops among active head coaches in the league. Montgomery is making his second career appearance after he also went last season. Tocchet is making his second career trip to the All-Star Game as head coach (2020), to go along with four appearances during an 18-year NHL playing career. Bowness is making his All-Star head coaching debut next month. □

Alina Korneeva and Brenda Fruhvirtova are into the 2nd round of the Australian Open

By JOHN PYE

AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Alina Korneeva and Brenda Fruhvirtova are both 16, both recorded their first wins in a Grand Slam main draw on Sunday at the Australian Open and both are expecting bigger things in the future.

Fruhvirtova beat Anna Bogdan 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 on a far-flung Court 17 not long before Korneeva — the Australian Open junior champion last year — rallied to beat Sara Sorribes Tormo 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 on Court 6.

For Fruhvirtova, there's likely to be a dramatic change in venue and match profile. If she stayed up past midnight and watched the night matches at Rod Laver Arena, Fruhvirtova would have known before bed-time that she'd be facing defending champion Aryna Sabalenka in the second round.

Sabalenka needed just 53 minutes to oust 18-year-old qualifier Ella Seidel 6-0, 6-1 in a match that started at 11:41 p.m. local time. That's because the men's defending champion, Novak Djokovic, needed four hours to overcome another 18-year-old qualifier, Dino Prizmic, to open the night session on Melbourne Park's main court. "For sure it will be a great experience," Fruhvirtova said. "Hopefully I will get some big court or a bigger one than today. I'm really looking forward!"

Not that she'll be completely overawed. She played 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina in the first round at Roland Garros last year. Last week, she lost to U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff, who is still 19, in the second round of the WTA event in New Zealand.

"It also gave me some experience," Fruhvirtova said. "Playing on such a big stage there are for sure some nerves before the match (but) I kind of know what I'm going into."

"And, for sure, it would be more exciting than to play on Court 17."

Including fourth-seeded Gauff, who plays Monday

for the first time in a major as a reigning Grand Slam champion, 11 teenagers made the women's main draw at Melbourne Park.

Sara Bejlek, 17, lost to No. 32-seeded Leylah Fernandez, who reached the U.S. Open final as a teenager in 2021.

Another 16-year-old, Mirra Andreeva, will get started Monday against Bernarda Pera on Court 12.

All the focus on the teenage players at Melbourne Park is nothing really new, at least for Fruhvirtova.

"I think it's pretty normal, because everyone is watching the rising stars," she said. "It's really good to in that light, I think."

Korneeva may even get to

face another teenager in the next round. But only if Brenda's older sister, 18-year-old Linda Fruhvirtova, can upset 10th-seeded Beatriz Haddad Maia.

Not that she's thinking too much about the younger players collectively.

"I'm trying to focus on myself. I'm not thinking about another girls, how they played and when they win or lose," Korneeva said. "I think everybody, it doesn't matter what age you are, you try to just to do everything on the court that you can."

Korneeva won the Australian Open junior title last year, and so feels fairly comfortable with the Melbourne Park setting.

"I'm not trying to think about



Alina Korneeva of Russia reacts after defeating compatriot Mirra Andreeva in the girls' singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Saturday, Jan. 28, 2023.

Associated Press

what I did last year and what I won last year, I just try to think what I have to do now," she said. "But, of course, it's so good that I played already

in (the) Australian Open. I know the organization. I know some people here, some organizers here, and they know me." □



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Eagle Beach – When you think of a restaurant that pleases the needs of a whole family or a large group of people with all different tastes? Think Water's Edge Restaurant. Located at the shore of Aruba's most wonderful beach, The Eagle Beach Aruba. Water's Edge Restaurant is guaranteed to serve you a fantastic magical night to remember. Whether you prefer to enjoy the view from indoors air conditioned comfort, outdoors in the soft tropical breeze or under a palapa with your toes in the sand. This spectacular restaurant offers the best ocean view sunset or sky full of stars dinner while the crispy Caribbean night wind caresses your face and plays with your hair.

From the minute you arrive there will be a great staff welcoming you with the most contagious smiles and warmth. The intense menu with a great variety of appetizers, main courses and delicious desserts will not disappoint. Seafood, Steaks and international favorites. All on one menu specially made just for you.

Culinary Voyage

Start your gastronomic journey with a scrumptious appetizer such as the Maryland Crab Cakes, maybe the Crispy

Calamari or the mouthwatering creamy Garlic Tarragon Shrimp. You can also opt for a classic French Onion Soup, a Lobster Bisque or the famously Water's Edge House Wedge, a crisp wedge of fresh romaine lettuce topped with homemade blue cheese dressing, diced tomatoes, chopped bacon, caramelized pecans and blue cheese crumbles, drizzled with balsamic reduction. This followed by the Chef's special of seafood such as Fresh salmon filet seasoned and grilled, topped with lemon cilantro butter and served with homemade mashed potatoes and fresh asparagus, a nice plate of Ahi Tuna or a succulent pasta dish like the Florentina Fettuccine Alfredo. Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of a devourable 22oz. Bone-In "Tomahawk" Rib-Eye, pan seared in garlic infused oil and finished in the oven or our juicy N.Y Strip Loin, seasoned & grilled. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi glace, mushroom sauce, or bacon blue cheese butter. For extra sides the options are delectable. Fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with choco-



late sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

Creating memories

If you are planning a birthday dinner, here you will receive a nice bottle of champagne to take home with you to extend your experience even further whether on the beach or your own private balcony.

Live entertainment

Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails mixed with concoctions. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Whether you join us for breakfast, lunch or dinner, Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar offers a relaxed and inspirational dining experience overlooking the beautiful Eagle Beach with spectacular ocean views. Gather with friends and family for drinks and appetizers or a night of pampering and relaxation.

Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all throughout the year, and hopefully will continue to do so in the years to come. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, every to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! ☐



"Water's Edge Restaurant is where magnificent beach views, amazing food and excellent service come together."

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For more information about the menus, entertainment and hours, please visit the website **watersedge-aruba.com**

